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Biden's censorship priorities: Protect Israel's political and financial interests while trampling constitutional free speech

05/02/2024 // Belle Carter // 2.1K Views



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The national security package bill has been signed into law, or railroaded in just a week. The legislation has a provision that could potentially ban the short-form video hosting service

TikTok from the United States. It was passed by the House of Representatives on April 22 and then by the Senate on April 24. Sooner than later, it received President Joe Biden's signature.

The fast transition of events gives the platform's parent company ByteDance two options. It has to divest TikTok to an American company in the next nine months, which Biden can extend to twelve if there is "progress" or TikTok will be banned in the United States. (Related: TikTok pressured to ban all truth and push only official narratives.)



U.S. lawmakers alleged that TikTok could be used by the Chinese government for espionage and propaganda as long as it is owned by the Chinese tech giant ByteDance. Sen. Peter Ricketts said that the platform shows Pro-Palestinian and Hamas videos which "have more reach than the top 10 U.S. news websites combined." "Let's look at where young people are getting their news. Nearly a third of adults, 18-29 [years old] are regularly getting news exclusively from TikTok. Pro-Palestinians and pro-Hamas hashtags are generating 50 times of views on TikTok right now even though polling shows America overwhelmingly supports Israel over Hamas," he said. "This is not a coincidence. The Chinese Communist Party is doing this on purpose. They are pushing this racist agenda intending to undermine our democratic values."

On X, formerly Twitter, the company posted its official statement on the passage of the law and called the impending ban unconstitutional. "We believe the facts and the law are clearly on our side, and we will ultimately prevail. The fact is, we have invested billions of dollars to keep U.S. data safe and our platform free from outside influence and manipulation."

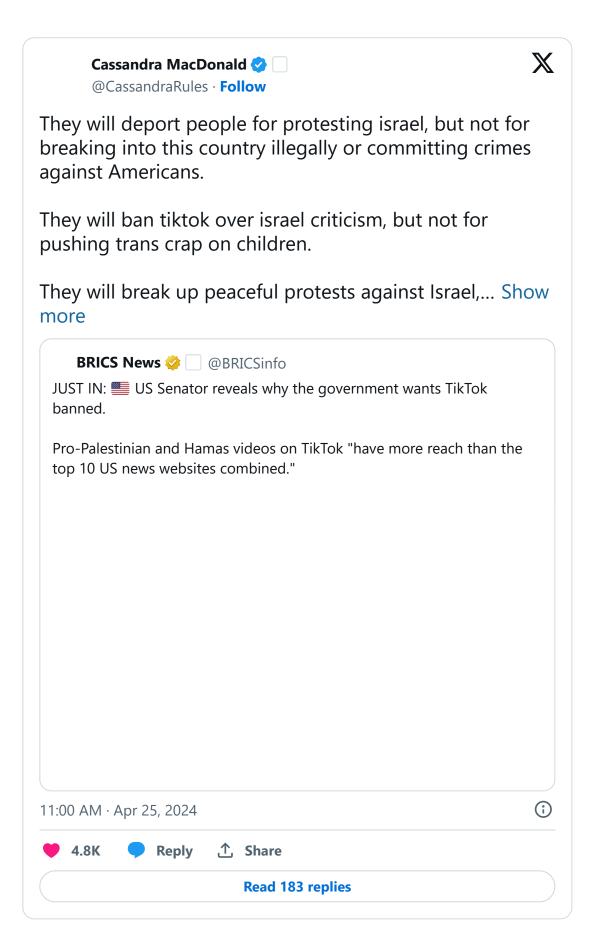
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TikTok also stated the implications that the ban could cause to business owners as well as their freedom of speech. "This ban would devastate seven million businesses and silence 170 million Americans. As we continue to challenge this unconstitutional ban, we will continue investing and innovating to ensure TikTok remains a space where Americans from all walks of life can safely come to share their experiences, find joy and be inspired," the caption ended.

The hosting service has been considered the fastest-growing social network in the world. It boasts over one billion monthly users and over 170 million active users in America alone. It was also the first app to reach \$10 billion in-app spending. Having hundreds of millions of users in the U.S., the news of the TikTok ban was received with overwhelmingly negative reactions, especially since the current regime has been openly declaring its support to Israel.

Cassandra MacDonald, a *Gateway Pundit* contributor, posted on X: "They will deport people for protesting Israel, but not for breaking into this country illegally or committing crimes against Americans. They will ban TikTok over Israeli criticism, but not for pushing trans crap on children. They will break up peaceful protests against Israel, but not actual violent riots during the Floyd nonsense," she argued. "If you're not pissed, I don't know what to say to you."



TikTok is not selling and vows to sue over potential U.S. ban

ByteDance, TikTok's parent company already declared that despite the banning threats, it has no plans to sell the platform. A tech-focused U.S. news site reported that the tech company was looking at scenarios for selling TikTok without the powerful secret algorithm that recommends videos to its more than one billion users around the world. However, ByteDance denied it was considering a sale. "Foreign media reports about ByteDance exploring the sale of TikTok are untrue," the company posted Thursday on Toutiao, a Chinese-language platform it owns. "ByteDance does not have any plans to sell TikTok."

The estimated valuations of TikTok are in the tens of billions of dollars and any forced sale would present major complications. Among those with deep enough pockets, U.S. tech giants such as Instagram-parent Meta or Google would likely be blocked from buying the app over competition concerns.

Meanwhile, TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew has said the company will take the fight against the new law to the courts, but some experts believe that for the U.S. Supreme Court, national security considerations could outweigh free speech protection.

Critics of the "sell-or-be-banned" ultimatum argued that this violates the users' First Amendment rights. The law's opponents, which include advocacy organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, maintain that the government hasn't come close to justifying the banning of the platform.

Associated Press writer Wyatte Granthham-Philips said in an article that lawmakers on both sides have expressed concerns that Chinese authorities could force ByteDance to hand over U.S. user data for years or influence Americans by suppressing or promoting certain content on TikTok. The U.S. government has yet to provide public evidence to support those claims. The writer added that if upheld, legal experts stressed that the law could set a precedent carrying wider ramifications for digital media in the United States.

Censorship.news has more stories related to the suppression of freedom of speech.

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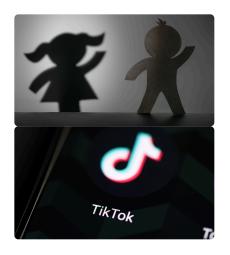
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